

Message Text

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FOR T

E.O. 11652: N/A
TAGS: ENRG, OVIP (BENSON, LUCIE WILSON), GW, US
SUBJECT: BUNDESTAG DEPUTY INVITES UNDER SECRETARY
BENSON TO VISIT FRG IN MAY

REF: BENSON-VAN AERSSSEN LETTER OF JANUARY 25, 1978

1. DR. JOCHEN VAN AERSSSEN, A BUNDESTAG DEPUTY FROM THE
OPPOSITION CDU (CHRISTIAN DEMOCRATIC UNION), HAS RE-
OPENED THE QUESTION OF A VISIT BY UNDER SECRETARY BENSON
TO DISCUSS NUCLEAR ENERGY DEVELOPMENTS IN THE FRG,
SPECIFICALLY FAST BREEDER AND HIGH TEMPERATURE REACTOR
TECHNOLOGIES.

2. VAN AERSSSEN TOLD US THAT, AS A MEMBER OF A DELEGA-
TION FROM THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, HE HAD FIRST MET THE
UNDER SECRETARY SOME MONTHS AGO AT A RECEPTION HOSTED
BY EC AMBASSADOR SPAAK IN WASHINGTON. FOLLOWING A
DISCUSSION ON FUTURE OPTIONS IN NUCLEAR ENERGY, HE
INVITED THE UNDER SECRETARY TO VISIT THE FRG FOR FURTHER
TALKS AND SITE VISITS. THE UNDER SECRETARY REPLIED WITH
THE REF LETTER, PROPOSING A DATE IN "LATE APRIL OR
MAY." WE FORWARDED THIS LETTER TO VAN AERSSSEN ON
FEBRUARY 8.

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3. VAN AERSSSEN PROPOSES TO SET UP A PROGRAM IN THE
WEEK OF EITHER MAY 15 OR MAY 22 (WHEN THE BUNDESTAG IS
NOT IN SESSION). HE NOTED THAT SUCH A TRIP SHOULD:
LAST AT LEAST "SEVERAL DAYS," FOCUS ON NEW FRG TECH-
NOLOGIES IN THE NUCLEAR ENERGY FIELD, AND INCLUDE VISITS
TO COMPANIES ENGAGED IN THESE TECHNOLOGIES AND POSSIBLY

ALSO TO COMPANIES INVOLVED IN SUPPLYING REACTOR MATERIAL TO BRAZIL. VAN AERSSSEN ASKED FOR AN EARLY REPLY AS TO WHETHER THE UNDER SECRETARY CAN VISIT THE FRG IN THIS TIMEFRAME. WE UNDERTOOK TO OBTAIN AN ANSWER AS SOON AS POSSIBLE. PLEASE ADVISE.

4. COMMENT. WITHOUT KNOWING THE FULL BACKGROUND TO THE UNDER SECRETARY'S DISCUSSIONS WITH VAN AERSSSEN, WE BELIEVE THAT SUCH A VISIT, PROPERLY MANAGED, CAN YIELD USEFUL RESULTS FOR BOTH SIDES. THERE ARE TWO CAVEATS, HOWEVER. FIRST, AT THIS TIME NUCLEAR ENERGY INVOLVES DELICATE ISSUES IN THE CONTEXT OF BOTH DOMESTIC FRG POLITICS AND BILATERAL USG-FRG RELATIONS. IT IS THUS ESSENTIAL THAT A HIGH-LEVEL USG TRIP ON THIS SUBJECT NOT APPEAR TO BE UNDER THE AUSPICES OF A SINGLE POLITICAL PARTY, AND CERTAINLY NOT OF THE OPPOSITION CDU. SECOND, WE SHOULD ASSURE THAT OFFICIAL FRG AGENCIES, INCLUDING THE FOREIGN OFFICE AND THE MINISTRY FOR RESEARCH AND TECHNOLOGY (BMFT), ARE FULLY INVOLVED IN THE PLANNING OF THIS TRIP. WE RECOMMEND THAT THE FOREIGN MINISTRY BE ASKED TO SERVE AS OFFICIAL HOST.

5. IN THE EVENT THE UNDER SECRETARY DECIDES TO MAKE THIS TRIP, THE EMBASSY THEREFORE PROPOSES TO DEVELOP THE PROGRAM IN CLOSE CONCERT WITH BOTH OFFICIAL FRG AGENCIES AND VAN AERSSSEN. END COMMENT.
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